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THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

A MONTHLY
MUSICAL JOURNAL FOR
USERS OF PIANO-PLAYERS AND
ALL MUSIC LOVERS.

EDITED BY
ERNEST NEWMAN.

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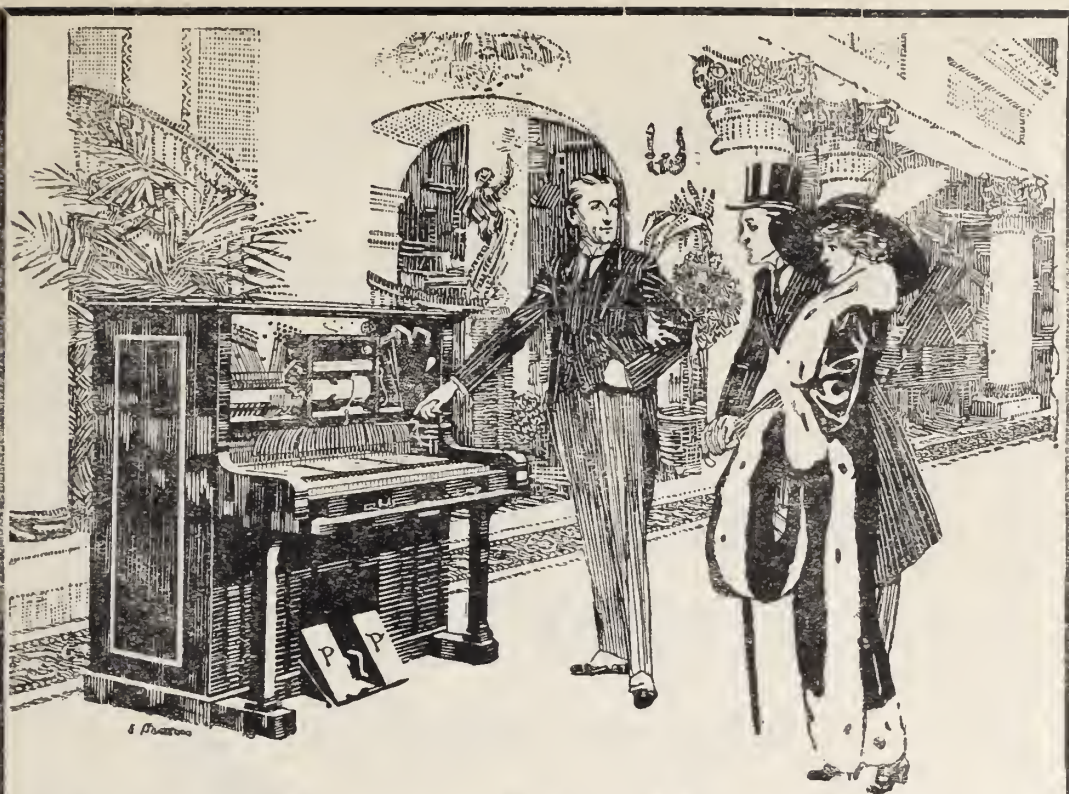
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The Piano-Player Review

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JUNE, 1913.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
STRONG AND WEAK POINTS OF LATEST PNEUMATIC PIANO-PLAYERS - - - - -	62
INTELLIGENT OPPOSITION, AND AN EDITORIAL COMMENT	72
THE DYNAMICS OF PIANOFORTE TOUCH - - -	82
THE LEADING PLAYERS DESCRIBED—I.—THE BROAD- WOOD-HUPFELD - - - - -	85
ADVENTURES WITH MY PIANO-PLAYER—V.—BERTRAM SMITH - - - - -	89
A TUSSLE OVER THE PIANO-PLAYER - - -	94
CHILDREN'S MUSIC—III. - - - - -	99
THE STUDENTS' PAGE—IV. - - - - -	105
MUSIC NOTES AND NEWS - - - - -	109
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS - - - - -	112
CORRESPONDENCE - - - - -	115
LIBRARY ANNOUNCEMENTS - - - - -	119

STRONG AND WEAK POINTS OF THE LATEST PNEUMATIC PIANO-PLAYERS.

“Does this thing play?” someone asks about a piano-player in Mr. H. G. Wells’ “Tono-Bungay”; and the answer is, “Like a rausical gorilla, with fingers all of one length. And a sort of soul.”—Not a very good sort of soul, would have been perhaps the obvious comment; and at any rate the uniformity of the “fingers” is undeniable. But the machine is human enough to have a mixed character of qualities and defects; and amid the exuberance of conflicting advertisements, and the dispraise or hostile silence on the part of antipathies not always free from ignorance or obscurantism, it may be worth while to discriminate clearly and reasonably between what is good in these ambitious mechanisms, and what is not.

Nothing can vary the length of the fingers. It follows that they must strike the keys of the piano (or the hammers) always in the same place, and, except for degrees of force, in the same way; and this means that the quality of touch is fixed once for all, when the machine is built. That is, perhaps, the most subtle and inevitable difference between the mechanical and the human player; it is the main reason, and may be soon the only reason, why the machine does not equal a really good pianist. But, after all, the touch of the ordinary pneumatic piano-player is quite passable—it would be a very superior person who should refuse it a hearing on that ground. In this connexion, however, the approaching disappearance of the separate exterior mechanism—the “cabinet player”—is to be regretted. No doubt it was heavy and cumbersome to roll away when a pianist wished to come to the piano, and it occupied space without much sightliness—two drawbacks which have destroyed its popularity and are leading at least one firm, with the latest inventions, to cease manufacturing it. But

it left the owner free to choose his favourite piano, and it obviated the necessity for filling half the piano-case with machinery, to the detriment of a clear tone.*

So much for quality. But variations in quantity of tone, in the sense of the sheer force with which the strings are struck, are well within the scope of the machine. Indeed, its responsiveness to an adroit use of the pedals is amazing, and one of its strongest points. It can pass from *ppp* to *fff* by unbroken crescendo, or in a moment. It is true that a pianist, hitting with all his might, can strike a louder note than he could evoke through the instrumentality of the machine—a rather doubtful advantage. Otherwise there is no fault to be found with the pneumatic player's capacities in this regard, nor with its range and control of speed—and so of punctuation and phrasing—which are equally responsive and complete.

This is true of the whole number of notes in action at any moment, and from moment to moment. But the human player striking four or five keys at once may distribute different degrees of emphasis over every one of them. How does the machine compare with him in ability to bring out the various "voices" in a composition?

Little can now be said for the mechanisms of ten years ago, which had no means of discriminating between different notes sounded at one and the same time. It was all or nothing, in the same degree, from point to point, and the devil take the treble; for the bass carried the charge all along the line, by sheer inches of vibration. But the need of at least a second degree of tone was obvious from the first; and no machine is now worth having which does not

* This defect is audible much more in an upright than in a horizontal piano, where most of the pneumatic machinery is placed outside and underneath the frame; but as the whole structure of an instrument vibrates when a string is struck, it is evident that any additional apparatus, even as arranged in the "player-grand," must make for dullness of tone. It would be no advantage to a pianoforte if it were so designed that a pianist could sit inside.

include at least one means of obtaining it—by the division of the whole compass into halves, which enables the performer to get the notes in one half struck louder than the notes occurring in the other half at the same time. There are several forms of this device—and a still greater variety of names—but it is not necessary to mention more than the two best : one, which divides the wind-chest, and so graduates the force of suction acting upon the “ fingers ” ; the other (confined to interior player-actions), which brings the hammers nearer to the strings in bass or treble, and so graduates the momentum with which the strings are struck, in either register.*

So far so good. But it is a poor pianist that has only two degrees of striking-power in his ten fingers, simultaneously ; and the rigid distribution of these two accents alternatively between bass and treble betrays the machine unmercifully, at its most mechanical. Clearly, two things were needful before the machine could bear comparison (outside a commercial advertisement) with any good pianist—more accents, and some less crude method of applying them.

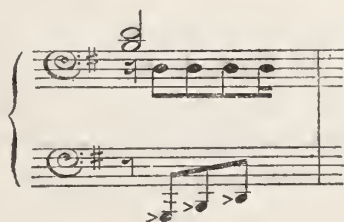
To take the second point first—the improvement upon the mere half-and-half accenting device, manipulated by bass and treble levers or stops. Obviously, if separate notes are to be picked out and emphasized individually—the ideal accentuation—then the accenting device must be automatic in its action,† or else the manipulation of the machine would become almost as difficult as the technique of piano-playing by hand. There are at present two—and only two—automatic devices for accenting individual notes, and they both proceed by cutting off part of the

* This latter method is the same in principle as the soft-pedal effect in an ordinary upright pianoforte.

† Obvious as this may seem, the contrary has been tried. Two years ago one could buy a machine with an accent device in which a pointer could be moved by hand along the tracker-bar to single out the notes which it was desired to accent. But this invention was a failure, because it was difficult to work at any time, and quite impracticable in quick movements.

suction-force from the main body of notes, and then securing a momentary return to the full force of suction in the case of the individual notes to be accented, by means of special accent-slots in the tracker-bar, to which special perforations at the sides of the music-roll are cut to correspond. Here, however, the resemblance ceases between the two automatic devices, and it will be necessary to describe them separately.

The first type—it is shared by a number of firms, and they have given a variety of names to the same thing—is confined to machines which have the divided wind-chest principle, and it works by means of two accent-slots in the tracker-bar, each connected with its own half of the wind-chest. In playing an accented passage, the bass and treble levers are held over (or the stops pressed down, as the case may be), so that a reduced degree of tone becomes the rule; and then the exceptional notes which are to be emphasized are accompanied, on the music-roll, by side-perforations, which pass over and unclosethe accent-slots simultaneously with the sounding of the notes to be accented, so that those notes, and those only, receive the access of the full draught. This works quite well where an accented note stands alone in its register, as in the following passage :—



But where, as more often the accented note occurs together with other notes at the same interval in the score and in the same half of the compass—*e.g.*, the leading note of a full chord—the 2-slot accent is not so successful; since the accentuation takes effect upon all notes which sound simultaneously with the transit of the side-perforation

across the accent-slot in their register, and there is no means of discriminating between individual notes in the same register. The only way of obviating this defect is to rearrange the perforations in the music-roll, so that the accented notes are sounded *just after* the chords to which they belong; since this enables an accent-perforation to take effect upon the theme without affecting the accompaniment. But although this retardation need not exceed one-thirty-second of an inch on the music-roll, it is almost always perceptible to a good ear, especially in slow movements, as an annoying *acciaccatura* effect. There is often, besides, a more or less audible jerk, due, no doubt, to the sudden opening of the accent channel from the wind-chest; and in cases where accented and unaccented notes follow quickly upon one another this is particularly obtrusive, together with a tendency for the accent channel to remain partly open, and so to pass on the effect of the accent to the non-accented notes.

The 85-slot accent—which appears to have only one name—is the second of the two automatic devices for accentuating individual notes; and it is free from most of the defects of the first. Instead of a divided wind-chest with an accent-slot controlling each half, the wind-chest is left undivided, and there is a separate accent-slot for every individual note. So there is no need to interfere with the correct time of the accented notes, even when they occur simultaneously with others, in chords or otherwise; since every note answers independently to its own accent-device: and for the same reason there is no tendency for the effect of an accentuation to be carried on to unaccented notes, no matter how rapid the sequence may be. The accent-slots are ranged at the sides of the tracker-bar in perpendicular rows, each row nine deep; and from that circumstance arises the only defect of this type of accented device. For, as every side-perforation in the accented music-roll must

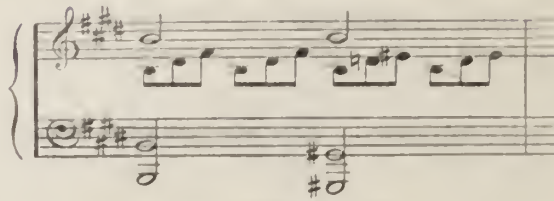
uncover eight accent-slots in its course, as well as that one slot for which it is designed, it must happen occasionally that by a chance coincidence an accent-slot connected with some unaccented note will be uncovered at the moment when that note is being played ; and so there will be the risk of a false emphasis. The connexions between the lines of accent-slots and the notes to which they correspond have been arranged in order to reduce to a minimum the chances of such an accidental accentuation ; but it has been impossible to eliminate them altogether. However, the risk, when it occurs, is obviated very simply, by advancing or retarding the dangerous note by about one-sixteenth of an inch—much as, with the two-slot accent, a note is retarded when it occurs in a chord ; but with the important difference that, in the case of the 85-slot, the note to be retarded is, from the nature of the case, a non-accented one, and its divergence from strict time is therefore hardly at all perceptible. And the need for even this slight make-shift occurs very rarely, by comparison.*

So much for the different methods of accenting one note, or group of notes, above any others sounded at the same time—or in other words, the means of securing a second degree of tone. Can the machine achieve a third degree ? If so, then although it must retain its “fingers all of one length,” it will have traversed many links of the chain which lies between the “musical gorilla” and M. Paderewski. For it is not mere imitativeness, or a “human-like effect,” that is at stake ; the point is that the structure of much, perhaps most, of the best music requires the simultaneous command of at least three degrees of tone for its proper reproduction. Take, as a simple illustration, this bar

*It must be noted, in addition, that the action of the 85-slot accent is quite smooth, because the complete individualization of the accent-device obviates the continual opening and closing of the accent channel from the wind-chest, with its more or less audible jerkiness.

THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

from the first movement of the "Moonlight" Sonata :—



It is clear that three accents—three simultaneous but different degrees of emphasis—are required in this passage : loudest for the theme in the treble staff ; softest for the tripleted quavers ; and an intermediate emphasis for the minims in the bass. Can the pneumatic player discriminate between these three requisite degrees of tone ?

With most machines, including the 2-slot accent type, there is no means of obtaining a third accent ; and so it is necessary, in playing the above passage, for instance, to give to the long bass notes either as much emphasis as to the theme, or as little as to the quavers—a choice of evils, both equally reminiscent of the musical gorilla. But the same instrument which contains the 85 accent-slots embodies also a device for securing, in certain cases, a third and even a fourth degree of tone. It is got by means of two stops, controlled by hand, which on being pressed down bring the hammers of the pianoforte nearer to the strings in the upper or the lower register respectively, and so reduce the *momentum* of the blow with which the strings are struck in that section, quite independently of the 85 accent-slots (which control the valves in the main action, and so diminish or increase the *driving-force* actuating the hammers). Accordingly, to illustrate by reference to the passage just quoted from the "Moonlight" Sonata, it is possible to side-accent both the treble and the bass minims, and yet to discriminate between them by pressing down the bass stop (controlling the position of the bass hammers) ; because then, although the hammers

belonging to all three side-accented notes will be actuated by the same degree of suction-force from the main action, the hammers of the lower register will have less momentum when they strike the strings, and in consequence the sound they evoke will be proportionately less. At the same time, the tripleted quavers will be sounded with a still smaller degree of tone; for their hammers will have no more momentum than those of the bass minims and, unlike the minims, they will not be side-accented. A fourth degree of tone, intermediate in volume between the second and third degrees, will occur when strings are struck without side-accentuation but with the hammers at the normal distance—*e.g.*, the top notes of the four groups of quavers in the illustration (since the division between the upper and lower registers, for the purpose of the bass and treble stops, is drawn between E and F, at the foot of the treble staff).*

It cannot be said that this third accent-device is as good as the 85-slot accent itself, which, except for the small difficulty already noted, is a perfect means of emphasis, as far as regards a second degree of tone. The limitations of the third accent, in its present form, are obvious. It depends upon a rigid division of the whole compass into bass and treble halves—just as the machines without accent-slots depended on a similar division for their one means of emphasis—and between notes occurring in the same register it is powerless to discriminate (*i.e.*, there can be no more than two accents simultaneously, in each register).† And another point to notice about this invention is that it probably will hasten the extinction of the “cabinet-player”

* In some instruments the division is made a semi-tone higher, between F and F sharp.

† Why should not a third or fourth stop be added, controlling, *e.g.*, one-third of the hammers at opposite ends of the scale? They would much increase the discriminativeness of the third accent without really complicating the manipulation of the instrument, since when in use they would be alternative to the existing half-and-half stops.

(because this control of the angle of the piano-hammers is only possible with an interior pneumatic action*) ; and that, for the reasons already noted, seems a pity. But these are small points, and they leave the way open for improvements ; the great point is the inclusion in the scope of a pneumatic player, for the first time, of three simultaneous degrees of accent. That is beyond doubt an important advance ; it adds much to the musical value of the machine.

Given a sufficient variety and flexibility of "voices," with complete control of time and phrasing and of loud and soft effects, "what further may be sought for, or declared ?" There is noiselessness—on the part of the pneumatic action, a most necessary thing ; during a pianissimo passage, or a rest, when a listener is intensely silent, nothing is more distracting than a mechanical murmur or rustle—not even its feminine counterpart, when an audience makes itself audible. But the manners of the machine have never been as obtrusive as the mannerisms of many well-known pianists ; and there has been a steady progress towards mechanical silence, which is now almost complete in the best instruments.† And, finally, there is a point of sheer excellence in the piano-machine which deserves unqualified praise—the clean technique of the thing. Where any ordinary performer drops notes right and left, and makes every other chord an arpeggio (to say nothing of mistaken notes and faulty phrasing) ; where hardly the finest pianist is quite note-perfect, even in the music of his choice : the unfailing accuracy and crispness of the pneumatic player's style is a matter that any audience might be grateful for. The thing cannot help being

* No doubt it would be possible, in an upright piano, to put in a second soft-pedal, dividing the control of the hammers with the existing pedal ; and then to make a cabinet-player with attachments for these, as well as for the sustaining-pedal. In horizontal pianofortes, where the soft-pedal has a sideways action upon the hammers and keyboard (to produce the "una corda" effect), this would be more difficult to contrive, though not at all impossible.

†It ought to be quite complete. Makers should not spare double casings, felt linings, and so forth, to attain this important point.

a machine* ; it is more mechanical than a pianoforte (itself a mechanism of percussion), just as a pianoforte is more of a machine than a violin : but, on the same analogy, the mechanism, which limits the free and direct control of the performer, extends the range of the instrument. And on hearing this arrangement of pedals and bellows achieve some fine distinction of articulate phrasing or accent, in the performance of a great and complex work of music, one might exclaim, as Richard Feverel's cousin, Adrian, once exclaimed about another more or less intelligent mechanism : "Dear me ! does the Law recognize that ? Why, that's almost human !"

J. H. MORRISON.

* The distinction between a machine and an instrument or implement turns upon a difference of degree—the directness or indirectness with which human action is brought to bear in the production of the effect. A scalpel is a surgical "instrument" ; but a revolving hair-brush is a "machine," although the barber manipulates it. Of course, it is all a question of names ; and no doubt the pneumatic piano-player is on the border-line of the two words. But may not a friend of the invention choose to praise the delicacy and responsiveness of the "machine" rather than beg the question in favour of a doubtful "instrument" ? (and not a "musical instrument," surely—the music comes from the piano ; the pneumatic action is either silent or noisy). It may be noted also that "piano-player" is ambiguous, as the term is often used in the sense of "pianist" ; and that "machine-piano" is the official designation, in the Board of Trade returns and elsewhere.

INTELLIGENT OPPOSITION, AND AN EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Among the contributors to the extended discussion of the piano-player which took place in THE MUSICAL STANDARD a year or so ago Mr. J. Swinburne was conspicuous. His chief contribution was the following, reproduced here with a few verbal alterations. It represents the best statement of the difficulties besetting the player-piano yet made public.

I.

LEAVING Mr. Grew's articles for the moment, I do not think Mr. Evans understands my position.

Suppose someone told me that it was possible to accent individual notes on the organ, and that he could do so himself, and any other competent player could; and that it was clearly proved by his hearing it done, or especially by his doing it himself, . . . I would naturally answer that organ mechanism does not admit of such accent.

He might rejoin that when listening to a good player he could tell where the bar lines come, and that in listening to a fugue he could hear the important notes of the separate parts accented. He might add that a good organist could alter the tone apart from changing the stops by the way he puts down the keys. . . . I would answer, that the harmonic progressions unconsciously tell him where the accents ought to be, that the important notes in the parts of a fugue are not accented, but made prominent by clipping the notes before, and that the alteration of the tone of a pipe existed entirely in his imagination.

He might reply by saying I "make a lot of absurdly negative statements which are conceived in ignorance and born of prejudice"; or that I had never heard the organ

played, only "trodden on" (Mr. Evans' phrase), or with regard to control of the tone of a pipe, that my ear is untrained or that I am tone-deaf. . . . Such a reply might have a slight savour of unintentional discourtesy; but it would not be at all to the point.

The only satisfactory reply would be to explain how the mechanism of the organ could produce the alleged result.

I have written nothing to belittle the player-piano or its advocates; I have merely pointed out that phrasing by its means is impossible, and have explained that by phrasing I do not mean merely increasing or diminishing the loudness of the tone as a whole, however rapidly; but independent control of the loudness of the individual notes without affecting other notes sounded at exactly the same time. I agree that the player-piano ought to be controlled by a musician; that it can give him great pleasure, however fastidious he may be; that it can do all sorts of things in the way of execution; and that it opens a new world of music for the student. On the other hand, I merely say it cannot phrase.

II.

The piano itself is a very imperfect instrument: each note begins loud and dies down very rapidly; its tone cannot be altered independently of loudness; and, as a pedal-board is not an integral part of the instrument, the left hand is called upon to attempt impossible things, the bad results of which are partially covered by the damper pedal. But the piano has the enormous advantage that the loudness of each individual note is under the exact control of the competent player: which enables him to phrase as he desires. The organ, though it has many other advantages, does not admit of phrasing in this sense. The "swell" of the organ, and also the rapid changes of stops, provide change of loudness, but only

of a whole manual. In both the blowing and sucking harmonium the reeds are generally in half sets, so that you can get a loud melody and soft accompaniment if they come in the treble and bass, and do not cross the division; and this sort of resource is used in the player-piano; in fact, the keyboard has been divided into regions of an octave, each independently controlled as to suction. But none of these devices permits of phrasing as in piano playing.

It is not too much to ask those who believe they can phrase to say how it is done.

Take first the simple case of the chord C, E, G, C. Any pianist who can play a fugue, can play this chord so that all the notes are sounded simultaneously, but any one, or any two, are louder than the others. Given four holes punched so as to admit air to the four ducts simultaneously, how does the executer arrange to play the C and G soft and the E and C loud? (I do not take a chord played thus as a sample of ordinary piano music, merely as the simplest example of what a player-piano would have to be able to tackle to enable a musician to phrase through it.) Player-pianists claim to accent any individual note independently of all the rest: take the shake as another example. A pianist can play, say, E and F alternately very rapidly, and he can make either all the E's or all the F's loud. Assume the repetition as stated, six hundred* a minute, then the player-piano can play six hundred of each note per minute. To make the F loud and the E soft, each F must be accented, so the suction must change and get back six hundred times a minute.

Will any player-pianist say by what mechanism he can do this?

* *Ten* hundred.—Ed. P.P.R.

Mr. Madell says he can vary the loudness of the melody without altering the accompaniment. . . . If the melody is away from the rest in pitch, so as to be in a region whose suction is separately controlled, he can, of course, do this ; but if the melody is mixed up with the accompaniment, by what mechanism does he select one among several contiguous notes sounded simultaneously and increase the suction for it alone ? I quite admit that the loudness of the whole, or of regions of the whole, can be altered, and altered more quickly than in the organ ; but I am still incredulous as to the celerity claimed. If the suction is controlled by levers, it is not difficult to arrange so that the suction follows the lever almost synchronously, but I cannot conceive how anyone could waggle a lever three hundred times a minute to phrase a single run as a pianist plays it.

III.

Mr. Evans' mechanism is still more puzzling.

As I understand his description, his feet work two exhaust feeders—presumably working on one exhaust reservoir. Supposing he wants to pump a note, very loud, and followed in a small fraction of a second by a succession of very soft notes, he presumably lessens the pressure of his foot ; but how does this *instantaneously* reduce the vacuum beyond it, considering that there must be a non-return valve between the foot-worked feeder and the next reservoir ? I do not understand how the vacuum can be reduced almost instantly, except by air leaking in, which is a very extravagant method, or by the vacuum being reduced by being used up ; and a single note following the loud one can hardly reduce the vacuum enough.

IV.

My contention is that the player-piano cannot phrase ; all that can be done being to fall back upon a number of ingenious makeshifts. The devices may be divided into

two classes : automatic, which depend on the punching of the rolls ; and voluntary, which may be either at the wish of the operator or worked automatically.

The main automatic are : accentuation by punching a note in advance of its place and bye-passing the regulator bellows ; and, *tempo rubato* in which the relative time of bass and treble are altered. These must be arranged in punching.

Then, as to the partly voluntary : given that the accented notes are punched out of time, the actual accentuation may be left to the operator, but it is much better done by a special duct.

The optional movements are variation of time by altering speed of roll ; this can be done automatically either by varying the speed or by punching : variation of suction in main reservoir ; this affects accented notes only when there are regulator bellows : variation of suction by regulating bellows or chokers ; this can be caused by hand, or by the mechanism.

It will be noticed that accent and *tempo rubato* must be provided for by the punching. The other movements left to the executer are purely optional, and can be controlled just as well by the paper roll if a few extra ducts are provided.

The pedals can be hand or machine controlled. It is not in the least necessary that the player-piano, in the broad sense, should be controlled by a musician, as everything the driver can do can be done just as well by the mechanism, the master-roll being controlled by a musician. The musician is thus still necessary, but a step farther back. A machine driven by an electric motor can be made to do everything a foot-driven mechanism can do. (The reason why the foot-driven mechanism is not complete is that people like to have enough left to them to

make them feel they are musical performers, and not merely generators of mechanical energy.)*

I believe this list substantially exhausts the means of expression of the player-piano. There is nothing in it that enables the machine to phrase, or the musician to phrase through it.

V.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Grew, Mr. Evans, and I think other writers, always discuss the player-piano as driven by themselves. I do not mean that they do not think anyone else can use it properly ; but that they look at it entirely from the executant's point of view.

Now, if you yourself are working the machine, you know exactly what you want, and can to a large extent create it in your imagination. Thus in playing the organ one imagines the phrasing, and probably most organists press accented notes harder anyhow ; in playing the piano, imagination holds notes on at full value while they really die away very rapidly ; and in playing upon the piano-forte orchestral music, one can to some extent imagine the tone qualities of the instruments. Similarly the player-piano can, and I maintain does, imagine that what he wants to happen, happens.

But how about hearers ? Does Mr. Grew, for instance, gain much pleasure in listening to other player-pianists ? I do not know if player-piano recitals are given now ; if so, do Mr. Grew and Mr. Evans make a point of going to them ? I wonder if Mr. Grew and Mr. Evans would enjoy listening each to the other, or whether they would be forced to play furiously at the same time in self-defence, as the lesser evil.

Seriously, of course, Mr. Grew's views are especially interesting as those of a well-known musician ; but he

* We must confess we cannot understand Mr. Swinburne in this paragraph.—
Ed. P.P.R.

seems to use the player-piano only to save or render unnecessary the labour of reading or learning music that he wants to explore. I do not gather that he enjoys the playing of familiar music he can play, or new music that he can perform at sight with ease. At the same time I do solemnly accuse him of crediting the player-piano with the beneficent workings of a musical man's imagination.

* * * * *

Let us cheerfully admit the bulk of what Mr. Swinburne says. Our withers still remain unwrung. His main thesis is that the piano-player cannot phrase, and that what the performer and the auditor take for phrasing is only an illusion. Perhaps so: but then there are already so many illusions in music that one or two more do not really matter. According to Mr. Swinburne, phrasing depends upon the ability to accentuate individual notes. Very good. We cannot accent individual notes on the organ: ergo, we cannot phrase on the organ. Yet somehow organists and the world in general have for centuries laboured under the delusion that we could. If we open almost any edition of Bach's organ works, for example, we shall find phrasing marks: and as they often differ in the various editions, it follows that each of the editors had his own notion of what the phrasing ought to be, and thought it possible to get the effect he wanted on the organ. An illusion that has existed so long has surely almost won the right to be regarded as a fact!

I am afraid we shall find a number of other illusions in our everyday experience of music, if only we sit down and take serious stock of our mental processes. How often, for example, do we credit an instrument or a performer or a piece of music with a quality that exists only in our imagination? We read that Ysaye or Kreisler or some other great fiddler played upon a wonderful Stradivari or Guarnerius,

and we are duly intoxicated by its tone when we hear it at a concert. But how much of our intoxication is due to the instrument itself, and how much to our being prepared to be intoxicated? It has long been a truism in religion and other matters that a man is over-prone to believe what he wants to believe. If Kriesler were to change his violin in the interval between two solos, how many people, I wonder, would detect the change? There is a story current in America that at a certain performance of "I Pagliacci," Caruso or Bonci (I forget which) sang the serenade behind the scenes, in place of the actor whose name was printed on the programme, and won no more appreciation than the latter would have done had he actually sung it. Had Caruso's or Bonci's name been on the programme, the aria would have brought the house down. We go out prepared to be astonished, in fact, and are astonished accordingly. Some years ago an interesting experiment in connection with violins was made in Berlin. Strads and common violins were played in turn behind a screen, and the audience was asked to decide which was which. The voting papers were most amusingly wrong.

I need not multiply instances of the operation of one of the commonest factors in human psychology—our readiness to see what we expect to see, to hear what we expect to hear. I am quite willing to admit that frequently the piano-player performer imagines he is phrasing in a certain way when he is not, the phrasing existing only in his own mind. But then the ordinary pianist is so often in the same case! He does not hear himself as other people hear him. Many a pianist will play repeated triplets in such a way that to the hearer they sound like groups of two, whereas to himself they sound like threes. Mr. Swinburne's trill is, I take it, largely a matter of imagination. "A pianist can play E and F alternately very rapidly, and he can make all his E's or all his F's loud." I venture to think that there

are exceedingly few pianists in the world with such perfect muscular discrimination that in a very rapid shake from E to F they can make every E louder than every F, or *vice versa*. What really happens is that the pianist makes, say, the first E and occasionally another E much louder than the F, and so creates the illusion that all the E's have more weight than all the F's. But this is an illusion. The ear, hungry for a rhythm, for an arsis and thesis, will supply them on the slightest encouragement, or even on no encouragement at all. The daily experience of all of us with the ticking of a clock is sufficient proof of this. The ear dislikes regarding the two swings of the pendulum as absolutely equal: so it imposes a fictitious accent of its own on the tick—an accent that varies with different individuals, or the same individual at different times. The clock goes "TICK, tack, TICK, tack," or "tick TACK, tick, TACK," according to our fancy. It is certain that a musician's knowledge of what a particular piece of phrasing ought to be like may often cause him to hear that particular phrasing when it is not evident to the ear of someone ignorant of the score.

It having been shown that if there is illusion in playing and listening to the piano-player there is also illusion in playing and listening to the ordinary pianoforte, it only remains to be added that some of Mr. Swinburne's illusions are themselves illusory. He implies that we cannot phrase on the organ: the organist only imagines that he is phrasing. But Mr. Swinburne himself has already told us that the organist *can* phrase by the clipping of certain notes—which, indeed, is a method of phrasing used upon every instrument, including the voice. Two apparently continuous and equivalent musical sentences can be differentiated by a slight theft from the time-value of the note that ends the first sentence, or, in some cases, by an infinitesimal prolongation of it. Now both these devices are at the command of

the user of the piano-player. Every good performer is incessantly flicking the tempo lever a shade to the right or the left at points where it is necessary to mark the termination of one phrase and the commencement of another. The effect of this is *not* illusion : differences of phrasing in the same passage can be audibly demonstrated to any hearer. Even in a trill it is possible to suggest, as well as the ordinary pianist can, what may be called an E to F shake or an F to E shake. The right accent at the beginning will be carried mentally by the hearer throughout the whole trill. Pedalling, again, can make the same succession of notes sound (1) perfectly even, (2) grouped in twos, or (3) grouped in threes. Any practical user of the piano-player, in fact, knows from his own experience that Mr. Swinburne's assertion that the instrument cannot phrase is a sad exaggeration. As for the discrimination of touch in every note, that is mainly a matter of scientific invention. The piano-player has already been so much improved in this respect during the last ten years that it is pretty safe to say that the next ten years will show a still greater improvement. There are plenty of keen brains at work on this and kindred problems. (See, for example, Professor Bryan's paper, summarised in another part of this *Review*.) Do not let us claim too much for the piano-player as it now is : but also do not let us claim too much for the ordinary pianoforte. Mr. Swinburne speaks quite confidently of *any* pianist being able to pick out, by means of extra pressure, any two notes out of a chord of four. Any pianist, of course, can do that with an isolated chord or two : but I should like to see the pianist who can effect the same discrimination in chord after chord in very rapid passages. It is quite possible, indeed, that in this respect the piano-player may before long surpass any pianist the world has ever seen, or any pianist we can imagine.

E. N.

THE DYNAMICS OF PIANOFORTE TOUCH.

ON the 6th February, 1912, Professor G. H. Bryan, Sc.D., F.R.S., of Bangor, contributed to the Proceedings of the Physical Society of London an interesting paper on "The Dynamics of Pianoforte Touch," in which he gave particulars of an invention of his own for improving and discriminating in the touch of the piano-player. The paper has recently been printed, and by the courtesy of Prof. Bryan we are able to quote here his own summary of it :—

"The author discussed Helmholtz's and Kaufmann's theories of the vibrations of a pianoforte wire excited by impact, with special reference to the effects obtainable with the modern pneumatical piano-players and player-pianos, and the common widespread belief that these can never reproduce the touch of the human fingers. While the rendering of many commercial piano-players in the hands of an average performer bears little resemblance to the performance of a professional pianist, the author finds that there is generally believed to be a certain element missing even in music played by a skilled performer on a first-class modern piano-player, this missing element being commonly associated with what is described as 'touch.' In view of the great value of piano-players to lovers of music, it thus becomes interesting to examine more closely what is meant by 'touch,' and whether it is capable of being reproduced to a greater extent than hitherto upon pneumatically controlled pianos.

"The question turns very largely on the extent, if any, to which the *quality* of individual notes can be varied by striking the notes in different ways. Such a possibility involves the inferences that (a) the intensities of the fundamental tone and its several harmonics are capable of independent variation ; (b) these variations can only be produced by varying the behaviour of the pianoforte hammer while it

is in contact with the string, for example, by lengthening or shortening the duration of contact; (c) such an effect can only be produced by rapid time variations of the pressure applied to the keys while they are being depressed—*e.g.*, by a fairly rapid decrease or increase of pressure produced by smartly striking or heavily pressing on the key.

“ The author finds that Kaufmann’s investigation fails to account for any such effects, and that difficulties arise even when the equations are modified so as to take account of impressed forces on the hammer comparable with those due to gravity. On the other hand, he describes experiments which appear to indicate beyond all reasonable doubt the existence of such effects of ‘touch,’ and which certainly demonstrate the possibility of reproducing them by means of the modern ‘pneumatic’ instrument. For this purpose the author’s piano-player, which is a first-class instrument of the ‘Standard’ type, but *with the whole keyboard under one common control*, was fitted with an ‘auxiliary lever,’ for which a patent application has been filed. This lever operates directly on the face of the auxiliary regulating bellows, and the air-tension in the bellows can be regulated by means of a sliding weight placed on the lever, or by applying hand pressure to the lever itself. In this way *the touch of the human hand can be transmitted directly to the keys of the piano*. So far as the experiments go, they indicate that even if the lever is worked in conjunction with suitable expression marks, as could be done by a person of moderate experience, increased breadth of contrast is obtained. While by varying the position of the load independently of the pedalling a variety of dynamical effects can be produced, which can further be increased by hand control.

“ A short, sharp pressure produces a bright ringing treble with a light bass, a sustained pressure produces a rich bass with a soft treble; the general character of the tone being suitably described as ‘metallic’ in the first case and ‘woody’

in the second. A very conspicuous feature of these experiments is the marked differentiation which they show between notes in different parts of the scale, especially in chords the notes of which are accurately ranged (as is unfortunately often not the case in music-rolls). The duration of the pressure required to produce the maximum effect on a particular note of the piano varies continuously from the treble to the bass end, being least in the treble and greatest in the bass; and by means of this natural or dynamical differentiation notes in a particular part of a chord at any part of the scale can be accented independently of the rest.

“Whether it is possible to vary the quality of individual notes is a point that can only be tested by playing single notes as opposed to chords. The differences that can be effected can only be noticed by a trained ear; in the author's experiments it has been found that some persons notice *very marked* differences, others notice very slight differences, others no differences at all. The differences are probably as conspicuous as those between a stopped string and a harmonic on the violin. It is not always easy to produce these differences for purposes of demonstration, though it is often easier to do so in the course of playing through a suitable composition. In any case the author finds that the effects can be obtained more easily with a pneumatic player fitted with auxiliary lever than in striking the keys with fingers. When the lever is disconnected the change observed affords some indication of the origin of the popular belief in the limitations of the pneumatically played piano.

“Unlike the gramophone, aeroplane, motor car and cinematograph, the modern piano-player has been conspicuous by the absence of reference to it in scientific and technical journals. The present Paper, which arises out of an attempt to obtain a closer degree of approximation to *playing the piano* with these instruments, indicates that they open up some interesting problems in the study of acoustics.”

THE LEADING PLAYERS DESCRIBED.

I.—THE BROADWOOD-HUPFELD.

OUR advice has frequently been sought by subscribers about to purchase a Player. The usual question asked has been, "Which make do you recommend?" and our answer, that the individual must use his own discretion. As propagandists of the piano-player *movement*, we have no preference. In a previous article—"How to Purchase"—we laid down the main conditions which a Player should fulfil, and further than that it would obviously be *impossible* for us to go. But to supplement this general advice we have considered it useful to publish a series of short articles describing the leading players now on the market. Our readers are asked simply to regard the information given as a plain statement of facts; a catalogue compiled without exaggeration and without individious comparisons. At the same time we shall describe no instrument which, according to our standard, does not satisfy a liberal minimum of practical requirement.

Messrs. John Broadwood & Sons, the well-known firm of pianoforte manufacturers, have made a feature of the Broadwood-Hupfeld Player, an instrument of the highest grade. It is only twelve months since they introduced this combination of the Hupfeld "Solophonola" Player action with their steel-barless grand and upright pianofortes. Seven years previously, however, they put on the market a less expensive instrument known as "The Broadwood," and they have found that the Player trade is a steadily increasing proportion of their business. Said a representative of the firm, "In a few years' time, probably, very few pianofortes will be sold without a Player action."

The point which Messrs. Broadwood emphasise in regard to the Hupfeld action is its extreme sensitiveness. The

“touch” is, indeed, most delicate, and effects can be obtained which not one out of a hundred good average pianists could get by hand. The whole of the pneumatic action occupies a small space in front of the case, and works direct on the pianoforte action. It can be taken out in one piece, merely by turning four thumb-screws. This makes it a very simple matter to get at the pianoforte action, and has obvious advantages. There is very little of the Player mechanism underneath the instrument, which means that the pianoforte tone is not interfered with. Generally the Player action is so “direct” that the pedals are to the feet what the keyboard is to the fingers, the same delicacy of touch being possible, and the same feeling of intimacy in playing.

The Player has the following further advantages :—

A transposing device which makes it possible for anyone playing accompaniments to change the key to suit the voice of the singer.

An accenting device by means of which any melody can be made to stand out above the accompaniment.

A “silencer” which enables the performer to run any part of the music-roll over the tracker-bar in silence.

There are also, of course, the ordinary levers for regulating the tempo, and subduing either the treble or the bass half of the pianoforte, and the sustaining-pedal device, which in this case is a small stop which can be pressed down by the little finger.

The transposing device is of the greatest convenience. The Player—speaking generally of all Players—is an excellent accompanist, because nothing is too difficult for it. All accompaniments, from the simplest upwards, can be played with the same fluency and finish. The performer needs serious practice, naturally, before he can make the best use of his Player as an accompanying medium, but the point is that the Player will respond fully to all his requirements

when his own skill in manipulation is sufficient to follow a vocalist. The advantage, in addition, of being able to transpose automatically is obvious. To do this on the Hupfeld Player the user has merely to move a pointer on a small dial, which is marked off in half-tones. The device is also useful in adjusting the roll to the tracker-bar, and does away with the necessity of a special lever for this purpose.

The accentuation of a melody is obtained by means of side perforations on the music-roll, the wind-pressure on the unaccented notes being meantime shut off by closing the two levers which control the tone of the bass and treble. But by releasing these levers gradually, gradations can be obtained, bringing the accompaniment up to any strength desired. This is what the earlier Players lacked, and what it has been the aim of all manufacturers to achieve.

Every Player-pianist will be able to appreciate the idea of the "Silencer." It enables one to play any portion of a roll without wearily playing through the rest simply for the sake of getting to the desired portion.

A further point to be noted is that the sustaining-pedal may be used automatically in combination with special perforations on the roll. It is brought into action by the turning of a small lever. Where the performer wishes to rely on his own judgment, of course he uses the sustaining device in the ordinary way.

The Broadwood-Hupfeld is not a cheap instrument, the price running as high as £302 8s. for the semi-grand model and £189 for the upright model. "The Broadwood" costs much less, but does not, in all cases, embody the whole of the devices described above. The differences are purely a matter of money, as must always be the case. All Broadwood Players are full scale.

The Broadwood music-rolls are now made in a new way which supplies one conspicuous advantage over the ordinary

type of roll. The great difficulty has always been to get a roll which would not "buckle" through the changes of temperature. Nothing is so trying to the sensitive performer as to reach a series of notes which, owing to the contraction or expansion of the paper, do not come out correctly. Messrs. Broadwood's rolls obviate this trouble by being cut in what is called the "contiguous" fashion. Instead of a single perforation for a long note, there are a number of small perforations. This prevents incorrect "tracking," but does not affect the continuity of sound.

Subscribers may also have "Artists' Rolls" supplied them. These enable anyone to play at sight correctly. The performer has merely to set the tempo lever as directed at the beginning of the roll, and the music is then so cut as to reproduce the rendering of some first-class pianist without further attention to any of the expression devices. The artists who have made records for use in this way include Backhaus, Carreño, Godowsky, Dohnányi, Busoni, Max Steiner, and Herbert Fryer.

ADVENTURES WITH MY PIANO-PLAYER.

V.

AND now I divided up the land that lay before me and set out boldly to explore it in detail. I determined to take my journey in set stages, and that I would harden my heart against all temptations to turn aside and wander down by-ways that should take me out of my route. For the most part my resolutions have been admirably kept. I am getting on well with my pilgrimage. I can look back upon the long way that I have come with a very vivid and minute recollection of the country traversed. I can look forward to the dim expanse in front with lively expectation. But heartily as I am enjoying myself, I find that I must have a holiday now and then ; and every few months my advance is suspended while I get down from the library a grand consignment of favourites, and revel in special programmes for a week or two. And here I would say that there is a keen delight in this art of programme building. It is a pleasure that in the old days was given to very few of us. I myself—not being an impresario—had never experienced it. It had rather been my part to criticise the programmes of other men, which I did most freely. And now I could exercise all my ingenuity in making up programmes—to fill an hour or two hours in an evening—quite after my own heart. According to my own view they were beautifully balanced, with the climax falling quite in the right place, keeping the hearer always in the best mood, and sending him away wholly satisfied at the end. It is not likely that I should have found any one to agree with me. But that is not the point. At last I had only myself to consider, and I could rejoice in all the subtle affinities between composers, or strong contrasts, as the case might be, which helped to put them into their right place relatively in my

scheme. Thus I had modern, classical, and romantic evenings; French, German, and Russian evenings—Symphony Concerts, Promenade Concerts, Popular Concerts, Centenary Concerts. But these were my diversions, my interludes. The real matter in hand was systematically to absorb the music of the ages.

When I seriously embarked upon this enterprise I tried as far as possible to enter upon it with an open mind. I tried to dismiss all my previous conceptions, my predilections and my prejudices. I tried to overlook my admiration for Schumann equally with my rooted dislike for Mendelssohn. Most of all I tried to get rid of accepted judgments and opinions. I did not want to know, I wanted to forget, which of the Beethoven Sonatas were held to be the finest. It was nothing to me, or I tried to make it so, that Tschaikowski was considered to be a greater composer than Glinka, that Brahms was held by some to be "frosty," or that Mozart was held by others to be antique. I meant to find out all there was to know about all of them. (It was an extensive enterprise that I had before me!) I wanted no views at second-hand. I was to be my own critic, and I meant firmly to establish my own conclusions. If there be any of my readers who are using their player in the same way—as a means primarily of extending their knowledge as far as possible over the whole field of music—I think that they will agree with me as to the value of this attitude of endless curiosity and an open and enquiring mind. The whole fun of the thing, if I may say so, is in this precious and newly acquired independence. We have been so hopelessly coerced by other people's opinions hitherto. It is in the formation of one's own taste and the education of one's own understanding that the true satisfaction lies. And if one finds, as one goes on, that one is forming many strong and violent opinions, often at variance with the popular view, so much the better. At least they have been

arrived at justly, and judgment has not been given without a full consideration of the facts.

And so I parcelled out the ground. Roughly speaking, every winter was devoted to some special line. I did not necessarily take various composers in turn. I had all sorts of methods of division, which often overlapped, but there was nothing lost by that. Sometimes I would devote myself to a certain period and deal perhaps with the music of the second half of the eighteenth century. At other times I would take a single man, and was hardly satisfied till I had sampled every roll in the library that bore his name. Again, I would pursue a given class of composition. I would take a special course of tone-poems, perhaps, or of orchestral variations.

I believe that my happiest hunting-ground so far has been my long and memorable "session" with the Piano Concertos. It is curious that in spite of a dozen years of most assiduous concert-going I should have known so few of them. And indeed I have no better ground of quarrel with concert managers than this. It is only a very small group of them that are commonly performed. And now I devoted several months to this department alone, and with the happiest results. I cannot but believe that there is some peculiar quality about the Piano Concerto, though I should be sorry to define just what it is, which makes it in quite a special sense well suited to the piano-player. The Schumann Concerto in A minor led the way. I have always suspected that there was nothing in the world quite like it, and now it absorbed me entirely for the time being. My player dealt with it most manfully, entering exultantly into the grand stride and rhythm with which it marches to a glorious conclusion. And after that the *Emperor* of Beethoven, and the rest of them. That was an extraordinarily rich field of operations, and I have often returned since to

favourite movements, then discovered for the first time. Mozart, Chopin, Tschaikowski, Grieg, and whosoever had written any work in this form that could be obtained at my library, were all drawn on in turn. Perhaps of all those that had been little known to me, I look back with the greatest pleasure upon Liszt's Concerto in E flat and Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto: the latter especially, as it was, for me, an entirely new discovery. I had not known of its existence till I found it in my catalogue. I was deeply grateful for the beauty of the endless haunting melody of its slow movement, so that I repeatedly broke the library rules and regulations by refusing to send this record back. I must have kept it four or five months in all.

The Violin Concertos which followed were not—quite naturally—so successful, though I covered the ground there also much to my satisfaction. It is not in the nature of things that the piano-player, or the piano played by hand for that matter, can make them *sing* as they are intended to sing. And I count among the chief of my failures a certain movement from the Max Bruch Concerto, in which the melody is not to be divorced from its true medium of the violin.

Before I conclude my adventures with orchestral music I must say something of my excursion into Strauss. This adventure is by no means complete as yet. Indeed, it is only in the very earliest stages, and I have the liveliest anticipation of what it may mean in time to come, when I come back to the attack. At present I am working in remote latitudes, but I shall return and take up the threads some time. I hope that before then the makers of records will be able to provide me with a larger supply. Admittedly Strauss is, for the piano-player, a hard nut to crack. But as soon as I had heard *Elektra* I was determined not to let the matter rest. I concentrated my attention upon the

duet from that work, got down the record and went boldly at it. I am certain that I have never had any record that I have played half so often as that one. Again I broke most scandalously the library rules, and for eight or nine months refused to send it back, and in spite of all I had to buy it in the long run. That was quite a unique experience, akin to the slow emergence of order out of chaos. At first it meant literally nothing to me, it seemed to be utterly beyond my compass. And even at the end I am aware that to any real lover of Strauss my rendering may have been quite impossible. But as time went on it came home to me with a rich significance, and I felt that this also I had made my own.

BERTRAM SMITH.

A TUSSLE OVER THE PIANO-PLAYER.

MUSICAL Manchester has recently been exercising its wits on the question of to piano-play or not to piano-play. The *pros* decidedly had it in the end : the *antis* were left nowhere. The fun began with a leading article in the *Manchester Guardian*, a paper which, as might be expected, took a wholly rational view of the matter. The article put the case of the general musical public as well as it could be put. By the courtesy of the Editor of the *Guardian* we are enabled to reproduce it here :—

THE MECHANICAL PIANO-PLAYER.

Mr. Ernest Newman writes excellent sense in defence of the mechanical piano-player in the *Piano-Player Review*, and, of the two qualities, sense is, after all, perhaps more important than sensibility in artistic judgments. We dislike intensely the habits of thought which would jealously preserve the enjoyment of an art as the property of a select few, particularly when this form of selfishness tries to justify itself under the pretence of zeal for the purity of art. It is true, of course, that the best mechanical piano-playing is not so enjoyable as even moderately good playing by fingers on a keyboard, but how little piano-playing there is that is even moderately good, how limited its range, and how laborious the methods by which the necessary technical proficiency is acquired. A few there are whose zeal outlasts the training in scales and finger-exercises, but for most people there is as little to be said for it as for compulsory Greek, and to deny the ordinary man his piano-player on grounds of high art is like refusing men who never could understand what a Greek aorist was access to PLATO in a translation. Or, again, it is like saying that a man must put no engravings of famous paintings on his walls unless he has done them himself. It is worse, for whereas an engraving of a painting gives the form and subject without the colour, a mechanical playing of a piece written for the piano gives everything that is in the original except the quality of the direct individual interpretation. This, no doubt, is capable of giving the greatest pleasure of all, though there is something to be said for the view that the performer is the natural enemy of the composer, as the great actor may be of the playwright ; but in most cases it adds

no pleasure, but only detracts. But the great argument for the piano-player is that it makes the enjoyment of music generally possible outside the concert-room. That, we imagine, is also the chief ground of objection to mechanical playing. There is weariness for the listener when the performer can feel none. But it is a great thing for the average man to be able to read a piece of music as he reads a book. One often meets a man who is fond of music but cannot play a note and might never have learned to play. Ten years ago he could not gratify his sense of music except in the concert-room. He was in the same state as the primitive man before books and printing presses, who could only taste the pleasures of poetry by listening to the recitations of a rhapsodist. But of course this supposed hostility between art and mechanics is really non-existent. Instead of assailing mechanics as a rival, the art which was a real living thing would only see in them a new world to conquer.

This brought the sentimentalists to their feet. (I use the term "sentimentalists" in no offensive way, but simply to indicate the people who will not use their reason where an inveterate prejudice comes into play.) Mr. Ananda Coomaraswamy managed in some extraordinary way to bring the discussion round from piano-players to folk-music, or something of that sort; and we all know that there is no reasoning with anybody with *that* bee in his bonnet. Mr. Coomaraswamy's objection to the piano-player is that "the multitude of such devices, so far from encouraging, always destroys popular art. There was a great deal more enjoyment of music outside the concert-room in England two hundred years ago than there is to-day: and the same thing is still true in Asia, wherever European concert-music has not yet penetrated. What matters for the race is that art should be everywhere spontaneous and closely related to everyday life. To substitute for this a general acquaintance with the most highly cultivated concert music or academic painting (for the principle applies equally in the case of the substitution of reproductions of the works of great masters for the work of living artists) affords an exact parallel with professionalism in sport."

Here we have the folk-faddist in full whoop. What on earth is there in ninety-nine pieces of folk-music out of a hundred that we should burn our Beethoven and Bach and Wagner for them? There are only two kinds of music, good music and bad music: and in neither case does it matter in the slightest degree where or whom it comes from. "Tarry Trousers" is none the better for having been written centuries ago by the obscure nobleman whom Dickens called Lordnozo: "Tristan" is none the worse for being written by a man whose birth certificate we can trace. In his comparison between music and painting Mr. Coomaraswamy ties himself in a dreadful knot. The true analogy to his argument that "popular" music is more vital to the race than "concert music" would be that we ought to burn down the Medici Print shop and buy up the works of the pavement artist at the corner of the street. The latter is surely as much a folk-painter as some obscure ancestors of ours were folk-composers—and his work is frequently on about the same intellectual and artistic level as theirs. But Mr. Coomaraswamy's antithesis to the "reproduction of the works of great masters" is "the work of living artists." In the first place "living artists" are of necessity trained specialists of the kind Mr. Coomaraswamy presumably objects to in music—the very opposite of the "spontaneous" folk-artist. In the second place, since every "great master" of the past was at one time a "living artist," Mr. Coomaraswamy's argument, if followed to its logical conclusions, would mean that a picture can be a blessing to civilisation while the painter is alive, and a curse to it after he is dead. In the third place, no folk-song that is worth humanity's remembering was ever written by the "folk." It was written by some artist who, humble and obscure as he may have been, had a soul more sensitive, more human, more beautiful than that of the clodhoppers around him. The modern composer is in the same case.

Beethoven is Beethoven and John Smith is John Smith simply because—well, because Beethoven is Beethoven and John Smith is John Smith. Beethoven has something to say that neither John Smith or any other of the “folk” could say if he lived to be a thousand: but Beethoven will say it all the more eloquently if he has learnt the technique of his art, just as Shakespeare will sing all the better for having learnt grammar and acquired a vocabulary. The *Manchester Guardian*, in another leader, quietly but effectively let the gas out of Mr. Coomaraswamy’s sentimental thesis. The writer frankly declared his preference—a preference shared by all sensible people—of “florists’ flowers” to wild flowers. “The art of the gardener begins where nature leaves off, and so does the art of the musician and the painter. We may sentimentalise folk-music as much as we will, but it is, after all, only the primitive equivalent of the music-hall ditty. Most folk-music must have been execrable stuff, and happily only the best of it has survived :* but any musician could undertake to make out of the popular music-hall songs of the last twenty years a collection of folk-music comparable in every respect with any collection of folk-music that has come down from the hoary past. If the enemy of the gramophone and the piano-player is reduced to including the concert-room in his ban, they are in a more unassailable position than we have thought.”

This brought another sentimentalist into the field—one “H. F. L. A.,” who deplored the attitude of the *Guardian* on this question, and thought that the wild flowers “appealed to a deeper and more inward sense” than “the brilliant bloom of our gardens and hot-houses.” Thereupon it became necessary for the *Guardian* to take *his* life, too, which was done in another leader on the same day. It

* Unhappily this is not so: a vast amount of the merest rubbish has survived and has been printed. [Ed. P. P. R.]

was aptly pointed out that when wild flowers make a great impression on us it is because we see them in enormous masses. A field of a million buttercups is a glorious thing: but then, what would a million chrysanthemums be like? What is the single buttercup by the side of the chrysanthemum? And what is "I'm seventeen come Sunday" by the side of the "Meistersinger"?

Among the many interesting discoveries the discussion brought to light, one of the most interesting was the fact that some of the opponents of the piano-player are also opponents of the spread of the knowledge of great classical music among the musical masses. We thus get a valuable but undesigned support in our original contention that the use of the piano-player will do more than anything else to spread this highly desirable knowledge among plain people.

E. N.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC.

III.

THOSE boys and girls who have learnt the different pieces spoken about in their part of the *P.P.R.* ought now to be well prepared to learn a sonata. Sonatas are very "classical," but for that reason the more beautiful when understood. And when composed by men like Joseph Haydn, they are not only classical and beautiful, but simple in addition.

Sonatas are generally in two or more parts, called "movements." The sonata I am going to talk about here is in two movements.

Sonatas first began to be written for the pianoforte when Bach died, which was in 1750, in the days of King George II. and Samuel Johnson.

Haydn was really the first composer of sonatas whose music we like to-day. One of Bach's sons (Carl Philip Emanuel) wrote sonatas ten or twenty years before Haydn. You will find one of these in the Pianola Edition (L3177-78). But it is not particularly exciting music; and so you need not look at it except for curiosity sake.

Haydn was born in 1732. He lived on until 1809 (the year Mendelssohn was born), and was such a favourite that people called him "Papa" Haydn.

The work for you to study now is Haydn's Sonata in G (Pianola, 9375, 9376; Perforated, X1542, 1543; Angelus, 15270, 15271). The first movement is made up of music so charming that it is called an "Allegro innocente," which means "bright, and with a simple innocence." The last movement is an active little "Presto."

When you start to play this sonata, you will at once discover that (ignoring the first note of all) it goes to a 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1 2 3, 1 count. This is because it is in "triple" measure.

But it is very elementary for you to count in "1-2-3's." It is far better to group the "1-2-3's" into "1-s," and so condense the music into big fine sentences (analyse it, not parse it!). You must, therefore, do this as soon as you have felt the triple nature of the measures.

When you get to the 16th of these "1's," stop; for you have reached the end of the first sentence, and must go back time after time until you feel you know it properly. (Don't forget to stop swiftly on the exact second that "16" sounds. If you are counting in a proper swinging manner, you will have to stop on the "*six*" part of the word "*sixteen*.")

You will soon find that one of the features of this music is a "*tap-tap-tap tap*," something like the same feature of your old hornpipe, only softer, and far more delicate. This "*tap-tap-tap tap*" comes three times in the first sentence, filling bars 3-4, 7-8, and 15-16.

When you feel justified in going further along the roll, you will find that this first sentence (which I must call "A,1") is repeated. So you won't need to practise it, but can go right on to the second sentence.

This second sentence will puzzle you for a moment. The "*tap-tap-tap tap*" comes all right on bars 3-4; also, it seems about to come all right on bars 7-8. But the middle "tap" there is out, and all you get (in the top part of the music, which is what I want you to listen to at the moment) is a "*tap- * -tap tap*." And again, instead of the music resuming the melody after bars 7-8, it keeps on with this altered figure, right up to "15-16,"—or, rather, up to "13-14," for "15-16" is occupied with a wonderfully beautiful chord.

Stop on that chord, for it closes the second sentence (A,2), and return to practise away at the whole of its sixteen

bars, observing how, at "11-12," the "taps" go down into the bottom of the music, there to remain until the chord at "15-16."

After the second sentence (A,2) comes the third (A,3); but this is only the first repeated, and so will not detain you.

You will remember the A,1 was repeated. A,2 and 3 are similarly repeated; and the measurement of the music so far is therefore—

Sentence A,1 (twice)	32 bars	} = 96.
Sentences A,2 and A,3 (twice)	64	

I must tell you, as emphatically as I can, that it is no use your going any farther with this music until you have thoroughly learnt the foregoing sentences—no use, that is, if you want to understand all about the music. Of course, you can go ahead and play right through the roll, and get a good deal of pleasure out of it; but it won't be the best pleasure Papa Haydn has for you.

This sort of music is like poetry. You may read prose stories, and enjoy reading them. But poetry has to be committed to memory, not merely read; because poetry is something you can only really understand when it is a part of your minds—just as you can only get the real good out of an apple when it is a part of your bodies—that is, when you have eaten it.

The reason why you learn poetry at school is because of its concentrated thought and beauty of sound. The reason why you should learn this part of the music by heart is because it likewise is full of thought and beauty; and also, because it is put to varied use later on, to understand which you must obviously prepare yourselves by means of full knowledge of the original.

So I hope all children will stay long enough at these 96 bars to be able to march to them step by step *in silence*.

I mean by that, to keep playing and playing the music until, leaving the instrument, they can take 6-times-16 strides down the garden-path to the remembered sounds. Of course, if they could dance to them, so much the better ; also if they could sing them.

We get now to the group of sentences we must call " B." There are only two of these, each twelve bars long, and each repeated.—The second part of the sonata is therefore forty-eight bars long—

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{B,1 (twice)} & \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots & 24 \text{ bars} \\ \text{B,2 (twice)} & \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots & 24 \text{ ,,} \end{array} \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{rcl} \text{B,1 (twice)} & \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots & 24 \text{ bars} \\ \text{B,2 (twice)} & \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots & 24 \text{ ,,} \end{array}} \right\} = 48$$

You will at once see that the chief thing happening in " B " is a development of the "*tap-tap-tap tap*" feature of " A," as altered in A,2. The music is very beautiful, even for itself, but as a continuation of " A," it is more than very beautiful—it is supremely so. You must play it with all the soul you can arouse within yourselves, particularly the great rich chord that comes out so finely on the 7th bar of the second sentence (B,2).

" A " and " B " together constitute the first part of the movement. We must refer to it as " I." There are two other parts (II. and III.). These are variations of the first part (I.).

II. has exactly the same music, bar for bar, as I. But in II., the melodies, etc., are set out with delicately rolling notes, and altogether the spirit at work is more fanciful. Note very carefully the strength that comes into the music at the 13th-16th bars of " A,2 " (the place of the beautiful chord I specially spoke about above. Note also the passion of bars 5-8 of " B,1," and contrast this with the sweeter, less agitated spirit of " B,2."

I don't imagine you will be able to play bars 11-12 of " B,2 " without a smile. I can't.

III. is much the same in size as I., but it is bigger in feeling—its “atmosphere” is grander, because it is the culmination of what has gone before, and the finish of the movement.

“A,1” is just sixteen bars long, as before.

“A,2” is sixteen bars long also; but the place of the beautiful chord is magnified, another six bars being added, with pauses.

I need not describe what is added. I only need tell you that it is something as perfectly lovely as a soft blue sky, and something so characteristic of Papa Haydn that we musicians who sometimes get a little too much of music (which is quite a possible thing, even apart from scales and exercises) always keep him in our minds for rest and solace.

There is real fun and jollity in the close (“A,3”). The brilliant rush upwards in bars 7-8 is exciting, and the sudden explosion on bar 16 is startling; but every bar has its own little turn of humour—which is another quality of Haydn for which we love him so much.

You will see that “B” does not form part of III. That is because this movement is a sort of “Rondo,” a form in which the first part has also to be the last, the grand plan of the piece therefore being :—

A—B—A—B—A.

The music in the finales of little 18th-century sonatas is rarely deep, and so does not call for such close study as the first movements, or for such exhaustive analysis. I shall therefore only give you its bare outlines.

The rhythm of the “Presto” movement is not in “three’s,” but in “four’s.” You could consequently count in “1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4,” though not when playing fast. You will find it best to contract the rhythm into “one’s” as before, on which you can float and dance and run as gaily as birds or insects.

Here are the "sentences": Part I.—A,1 (8 bars), A,2 (12 bars); B,1 (8 bars), B,2 (20 bars, the same as A,1 and A,2, but with some fanciful rests). You will observe that the two sentences of "A" are repeated, making forty bars in all, before "B" begins. "B" also is repeated, this part consequently covering fifty-six bars.

Part II. is not quite so clear as Part I., but you will soon understand it if you play it in these sentences—A, 1 (8 bars), A,2 (the same as A,1); B,1 (8 bars), B,2 (16 bars); and, lastly, what we might call "B,3" (8 bars), this last being a passage leading into Part III.

Part II., you will notice, is of the same *rhythm* at Part I., but it is of different *movement*, and has a more rugged outline.

Part III. is merely a decorated repeat of Part I., and so will not give you the slightest trouble.

You must work really hard at Part II. Fortunately the music is well worth it; though perhaps just a *little* inclined to sound the note which belongs to the 18th century rather than to all time. I wonder how many of you have found out yet what that note is? It is in Goldsmith's and Johnson's poetry, and in Sheridan's plays. It is also in all the history of those times, which is what your teachers, perhaps, make clear to you at school.

But it is most apparent in certain of the pianoforte sonatas of Mozart, a composer who lived between 1756 and 1792, one of which I shall show you in a month or two from now; but not until you have mastered a certain work of Beethoven (the successor to Haydn and Mozart), which I have safe up my sleeve for you.

For recreation while working at your Haydn, will you all look at the "Cabaletta" of Lack.

(*To be continued.*)

THE STUDENTS' PAGE.

IV.

SCHUMANN'S "Fantasiestücke" is a connected group of pianoforte pieces, composed in 1837 (Schumann's 28th year), and so representative of the earlier spirit of the "Romanticism" which came into the music of Western Europe three generations ago. It comprises eight numbers, four of which are to be described here: (1) "Aufschwung," No. 2; (2) "Grillen," No. 4; (3) "Des Abends," No. 1; and (4) "In der Nacht," No. 5. The remaining four will be dealt with in a subsequent number of the *P.P.R.*, as also will the matter of the artistic continuity of the eight compositions.

The English titles of the pieces specifically mentioned are (1) "Soaring," (2) "Whims," (3) "Evening," and (4) "At Night."

"Aufschwung" (Pianola, 9237; Angelus, 15075; Perforated, X1930) is a piece of music of great spiritual intensity; but as it is dangerously easy to play on the piano-player, it calls for exceptional care in its practice. The music is of "duple" rhythm, and moves throughout in 6-8 time, with two points of "accidental" variation. The form of the composition is simple "A, B, and C," with a further division of the main parts into shorter sections.

The first part (A) consists of (1) a 16-bar phrase, the first accented note being the third note of the music, and the second accented note the ninth; and (2) a 24-bar phrase. In the first phrase is a cadence at the 8th bar; in the second are cadences at the 8th and 15th-16th bars.

The second part of "Aufschwung" (B) is led into by a 12-bar repetition of the opening phrase of the first part (A).

The second part itself may be practised in four sections: (1) bars 1-18, (2) bars 19-32, (3) bars 33-40 (a partial repeat of bars 1-18), and (4) bars 41-62 (a broad return to the original opening of the piece, with fragmentary entries of the main theme).

The third part (C) is a repeat of the first (A), the coda being a last appearance of the main theme.

The points mentioned above of accidental departure from the normal rhythm are (1) in the first section of A, bars 5-6 and bars 13-14, where (as in "Des Abends") a 3-4 melody is set over a 6-8 accompaniment; and (2) in the second section of A, bars 10-12 and 14-15, where the melody moves simultaneously in tenor and treble, but with a curious little

THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

variation whereby every alternate note in the treble comes a fraction of a beat earlier than its fellow in the tenor.

“Aufschwung” is too clear a composition to call for more than a few bare analytical remarks. It should, however, be none the less exhaustively studied, not only for its own sake, but for the insight it gives into the very nature of music, whether rhythmical, melodious, harmonic, formal, or spiritual. “Aufschwung” is also a fine example of Schumann’s own genius, and of the new spirit which came over music with the passing of the age of Beethoven.

“Grillen” (Perforated, X2047; Pianola, 9066) is in similar three-part form to “Aufschwung.” The first and third parts are in elementary triple rhythm; but they contain many special accents which—learnt from the printed page—convert the music into advanced study for artistic pedalling; while the second part (B) is so rhythmically intricate that many students will find it unintelligible. Careful study of its peculiarities, however, in the light of the following remarks, should eventually clear away the obscurities.

The middle section (B) commences softly (in a minor key), after the repeat of the first phrase which closes the first section (A). Its first twelve bars are most irregular in rhythm, but close with a clear cadence. In bars 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8, the *first* chord of the bar is tied back to the *last* chord of the preceding bar (*i.e.*, to the third pulse of bars 0, 2, 4, 6, 7). There is thus no note struck at the beginnings of these bars, and any pencil marks drawn across the roll to show the place of bar-lines must consequently come in the middle of perforations. Then, again, bar 8, instead of containing *three* beats, contains only *two*. Bar 9 has three beats, but the first of them is silent. The 10th, 11th and 12th bars contain the fine, clear cadence which completes the phrase.

The student should thoroughly master the above, for in it lies the key to the ensuing phrase.

This latter is 24 bars long. It has a sustained cadence at bar 16, and syncopations (*i.e.*, the above tying of the first chord of one bar to the last chord of another) in bars 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15, and in bars 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, and 23.

“Des Abends” (Pianola, 9234) contains a rhythmical problem which, if unresolved, destroys the special beauty of the music—indeed, makes the piece commonplace.

Played without knowledge of what the composer has written, the melody seems to move as an ordinary waltz melody—

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
 $\underline{\hspace{0.5em}}$
 upon a simple bass—
 1 ——— 1 ——— 1 ——— 1 ———

which is the direct opposite of the true rhythmical nature of the composition. The melody certainly has a $\underline{1} 2 3$ movement, but the harmonies are as $\underline{1} 2 \underline{1} 2$; and so the triple movement of the melody is merely an *accident* superimposed upon the duple movement of bass and accompaniments, the latter the *essence* of the music.

When the notes of triple-time are divided into 2's, the accentuation becomes—

$\widehat{1\ 2} \quad \widehat{3\ 4} \quad \widehat{5\ 6} \qquad \widehat{1\ 2} \quad \widehat{3\ 4} \quad \widehat{5\ 6}$
 $\underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \quad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \quad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \qquad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \quad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \quad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}}$

When the notes of duple-time are divided into 3's, the accentuation becomes—

$\widehat{1\ 2\ 3} \quad \widehat{4\ 5\ 6} \qquad \widehat{1\ 2\ 3} \quad \widehat{4\ 5\ 6}$
 $\underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \quad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \qquad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}} \quad \underline{\hspace{0.5em}}$

which is generally called "6-8" time. The fundamental movement of "Des Abends" is the 6-8.*

The student therefore has to produce an accent upon the fourth note of the group of six which makes up each of the bars of this piece, *i.e.*, upon the sounds which occur between the 2nd and 3rd of each group of three melody notes.

To do this, he should first mark on his roll the accented melody notes. As the first note of all is one of these, and as the progression of the melody is fairly regular, this will be found an easy task. The student should next mark the accompaniment notes which occur between the 2nd and 3rd melody notes. He may then proceed to practise, accenting the first (or bass) notes in the ordinary manner, and accenting, with a full rich-toned accentuation, the notes in the centre of the bar. The melody (dominant by nature above the rest of the music) may be left to look after itself.

* The "Des Abends" of Schumann is written in 2-8 time. For convenience of description, however, it is regarded as written in 6-8. The reader who can respond to the delicate refinements of the mood which induced the composer to adopt a 2-8 signature to a 6-8 metre will not need the above remarks, and so will not be repelled by what must of necessity offend a purist in musical technology.

THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

In practising, the student will do well at first to make a *tenuto* or a *ritenuto* (or even a slight *pause*) on the central notes of the bar. This will eventually prove as profitable artistically as practically; because in finished performance, the 3rd melody note of each bar requires a delicate, clinging *tenuto*, which can only be produced by a momentary holding-up of the *time*.

The form of "Des Abends" is simple. The first phrase (bars 1-16) is repeated. The second (bars 17-38) contains a cadence in its 8th bar. The third phrase (39-54) is the same as the first. The fourth (55-76) is the same as the 2nd (17-38) plus a coda (77-88).

In marking the bars, etc., upon his music-roll, the student must note the following exceptions from the normal flow of the music—(1) The last bar of the first phrase (bar 16) contains but two melody-notes, the place of the third being occupied by a rest. (2) Bars 21-24 (bars 5 to 8 of the second phrase) have each the three melody-notes, but in a slightly displaced fashion, the notes falling on the "2-4-6" of their bars, not on the customary "1-3-5," i.e.—

1 2 3 4 5 6, 1 2 3 4 5 6

The bass in these bars remains normal. (3) The same displacement of melody-notes occurs four bars later (viz., bars 29-31). (4) There are no melody-notes at all in the last two bars of the second phrase (bars 37-38).

"In der Nacht" is a piece which is only for experienced player-pianists, and those moreover familiar with the idiom of the pianoforte. It is a tumultuous, impassioned piece of music, and needs to be performed in ways that cannot be described in general terms. It should not be neglected by the student, but it should not be taken in hand until the student has prepared himself by a careful study of the other numbers of Schumann's "Fantasiestücke."

(To be continued.)

THE STUDENTS' PAGE is a department of the "Piano-Player Review" established for the use of serious player-pianists. The main features of player-piano technique will be expounded month by month, and technical and æsthetic difficulties solved for correspondents.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that "serious" player-pianists are not of necessity students of advanced music, and that (in accordance with our "Editorial" in the February issue) we are anxious to stimulate imagination and increase knowledge, even in most rudimentary directions.

MUSIC NOTES AND NEWS.

ON the 28th April a demonstration was given at Armfield's Hotel, South Place, London, of a new piano-player called the Pistonola, which is to be put upon the market shortly by Messrs. Boyd, Limited. The instrument is the invention of two young English engineers, Mr. H. C. Coldman and Mr. C. F. Webb. Bellows are done away with in favour of pistons of compressed graphite, working in cylinders of metal. It is claimed that by this method the tension of the air used is twenty-five times greater than usual, and that corresponding advantages accrue in the matter of attack and repetition.

* * * * *

An American gentleman attributes his complete recovery from chronic rheumatism to vigorous pedalling of a player-piano. The instrument no doubt has other hitherto undiscovered virtues.

* * * * *

It was a question on Tuesday night whether the audience of Messrs. W. H. Priestley and Sons' pianola and song recital at the Wolverhampton Library, Waterloo Road, were more delighted with the whole artistic effect of the recital than utterly amazed with the wonderful possibilities of the instrument that was used.

* * * * *

Nothing can illustrate better what we mean than to mention two items that were placed consecutively on the programme, namely, the Chopin Sonata in B flat Minor, and the ever-popular Romance, Barcarolle, and Entr'acte from *The Tales of Hoffman*.

* * * * *

This surely seems as great a contrast to the usual uniform programme as the contrast between the two compositions. The blending of the highly-classical Chopin Sonata with the Offenbach music was certainly a happy thought. Thus widely-different tastes were at the same time given satisfaction.

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Truly no greater blow could be given to those prejudiced and in many cases ignorant minds that still condemn the pianola as being mechanical.—*Midland Evening News*.

THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

COURT OF APPEAL CASE.

Judgment has been obtained by the Orchestrelle Company, in the French Court of Appeal, of holding the exclusive right of this company to the use of the word "Pianola." The decree states that the Aeolian Company validly registered the word "Pianola" as a new word constituting an arbitrary and fancy designation indicative of private appropriation; that the public habit of designating by the word "Pianola" any automatic piano is of no relevance or importance; and that this habit cannot in any way deprive the company of its rights. That the right is moreover admittedly recognised by the important piano factors, who have thought it necessary to create for themselves other special names or designations for the automatic pianos of their own manufacture. And consequently, in the grounds for its decree, the court states that "the word Pianola constitutes an arbitrary and fancy designation of which the Aeolian Company has the exclusive ownership."

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PIANOFORTE-PLAYER RECITAL.

On Wednesday evening, April 23rd, at Messrs. Murdoch & Co.'s Music Saloon, another recital was given by means of their well-known "Connoisseur Spencer" Player-Piano, operated by Mr. D. Ferguson, with songs and instrumental selections by Miss Catherine Ferguson, contralto; Mr. James McDowell, bass; and Mr. Arthur Conquer, violin, accompanied as usual by the Player-Piano.

The programme was an excellent one, well-balanced, and found much acceptance with the audience, which comfortably filled the saloon. It opened and closed respectively with the immensely popular waltz, "Nights of Gladness" (Ancliffe) and "Deuxième Valse Brillante" (Liebling), each being played in well marked and sprightly fashion.

An attractive little item, "Badinage" (Herbert), delightfully handled, was followed later by Liszt's "Rhapsodie Hongroise," No. 2, which closed the first part. This was the principal number for Player, and calls for special notice. Liszt's music makes big demands on technique as a first essential to correct interpretation, and backed by clear musical insight and tone colouring never fails to interest an audience. These essentials were well in evidence, and a brilliant performance resulted, which was accorded a warm recall. The remaining items, "Romance," Op. 78, No. 2 (Helmund), and "Air de Ballet" (Chaminade), in very

distinct contrast, were given with fine phrasing and touch, and served admirably in demonstrating the possibilities and capabilities of the instrument in portraying individuality of musical thought and feeling.

Miss Ferguson made a very encouraging first appearance, giving promise of a successful future. Her voice is of good resonant and sympathetic quality, easy and even in production. Her songs were "Time's Roses" (K. Barry) and "La Serenata" (Tosti), recalls being accorded her in each, and to the latter she responded with a rendering of "The Little Silver Ring" (Chaminade).

Mr. McDowell, a well-known local singer and member of the late "Thespians," made excellent use of his powerful bass voice, interpreting with fine dramatic effect and character of tone "The Trumpeter," and later in a spirited treatment of Hatton's delightful song, "To Anthea." A well-merited encore followed, and he replied with "In Sheltered Vale," sung with kindly generous tone and diction.

Mr. Conquer, who has long been associated with these recitals, once more proved himself a very capable violinist. His playing of *Scène de Ballet*, Op. 100 (De Bériot), was full of sparkle, well timed and intelligent, and, being encored, he played with fine tone and feeling "Ave Maria" (Bach-Gounod). His second number (1st Movement from Grieg's Sonata, Op. 45), a piece of much beauty, romantic and dramatic in form, offered both soloist and accompanist fine scope for contrasted effects in tone and rhythm. It was played with rare freedom and breadth of style, correct intonation and phrasing, and was most warmly received.

These recitals are of a most enjoyable nature, and one can always rely on an interesting programme, excellently performed.

Hastings Gazette.

* * * * *

The *English Review* makes a capital suggestion that hotel and boarding house proprietors should exchange their "usually silent instrument" for a player-piano. Most of us can only too readily recognise the truth of the statement that often "someone possessing more pluck than musical ability thumps out popular melodies." Certainly a player-piano and a good and varied selection of rolls would make a wet afternoon during a holiday something far different from the wearying time it often is. Hotel and boarding house proprietors, please note.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LIGHTHOUSE (PLYMOUTH).—"Do we consider the Piano-Player a musical instrument?" Any one number of the *Review* will convince you that we do. We hope most owners take more pains to understand the player than you have taken to understand your copy of the *P.P.R.*

FEMININE (YORK).—You consider the last two paragraphs, page 27, a tall order! Well, yes, perhaps it is for most women. Your letter is proof that your mind is not *boundless*!

READER (DERBY).—Yes, Mr. Bertram Smith when he mentions "footing" does mean the technique of blowing. This technique is fully explained in our back numbers in "How to Play." As your legs ache so horribly, it is evidently necessary for you to take this "footing" technique seriously—and calmly. You will save much exertion, and play much more artistically when you know how to blow properly.

READER (KNOWLE).—On broad lines the blowing for the player-organ is very like blowing for the piano-player. Some organs are more sensitive (in tone) to extra wind-pressure than others. The danger of over-blowing a reed organ is that one is apt to raise the pitch of one rank more than another and bad unisons result.

POLYPHONE (CREWE).—The dumb notes in your organ may be due to clogged pneumatics or reeds. If you can hear the movement of the pallet, the trouble is obviously in the reed itself. Take out the reed, brush it carefully, give it a sharp rap as you would a tuning fork, and replace it. If the reed is not broken it will probably speak properly. See that the tongue is not jammed with a particle of grit or fluff.

DOUBTFUL (COVENTRY).—"How to Purchase" seems clear enough. A good price for the player-piano would mean in the neighbourhood of £100: but good instruments may be purchased for less.

R. H. P. (DOVER).—Two good marches to go with the pieces you mention are Schubert—*Marche Militaire*, and Kowalski—*Marche Hongroise*.

AMATEUR (CARDIFF).—You will find a programme of eight items, with a few minutes' interval at half-way, long enough. NO! don't attempt accompaniment with only one rehearsal unless you are quite expert,

and know the songs perfectly. See articles "How to Accompany," Vol. I., Nos. 1, 2, 3.

GRUBBER (BARNES).—We have not yet seen or heard the new player you mention, and cannot say what you want. The name seems a little unhappy :—Like Dan Leno's poppies, what a devil of a lot of "olas !"

TICKLED (PORTSMOUTH).—Hilarious friend ! and we write these replies so seriously ! If you are in any danger of over-laughing ; of being "Tickled to death" (a famous cake walk), read "Punch."

WONDERING (ABERDEEN).—Poor C. I. ! Read the last six lines of the article again.

A. R. H. (DONCASTER).—Striking pneumatics are those bellows (one for each note), the collapsing of which cause the movement of the hammer to the strings. They vary in size and shape with each maker, but there is every reason to suppose that theory in the past is superseded by present practice, and that a smaller pneumatic can be made to do equally powerful work, and much more delicate work than the old larger ones.

TOM (SUNDERLAND).—From your letter one would suppose that you had tried putting your player in a hot bath, like the lady who spring-cleaned the valuable 'cello. Seriously 11 questions are—well, eleven ! Spend 6d. and buy *P.P.R.*, No. 1, read "Care of the Piano-Player," and be thankful.

ARCANA (CAMBRIDGE).—Corresponding with every note on the piano is a small bellows. This bellows is made to work by means of perforations in paper-roll admitting air. The *piano* mechanism is operated by the movement of these bellows or pneumatics. Read "Evolution of the Piano-Player," Vol. I., Nos. 1, 2, 3.

NORAH (BELFAST).—Quite an ingenious idea. I see ! A small electric motor to work either a sewing machine or the piano-player. Good ! but it would not be a difficult matter to so arrange it that you could work both at once. Think of it, the "Song of the Shirt" on the one machine, and "The Holy City" on the other. Go to a good patent agent and be *very* business-like.

W. F. A. (JERSEY).—The hire system is a whip in the hand of the unscrupulous. It is a reasonable method as between a fair trader and

a "hard-up" purchaser. On the whole it is pernicious. The law should be (and may be) amended in the near future.

BAILEE (WARRINGTON).—Send us a copy of your agreement, and we will try to tell you what is best to do. Meanwhile admit no representative from the other side.

FRED H. J. (MERTHYR).—The music-rolls are, or have been, damp—dry them thoroughly, try them, and write again. We will reply direct.

MATER (BRONDESBURY).—Thanks: we like encouragement, and are glad that our advice in February issue was so sound. Try your son with the three following rolls, and help him from the score:—Air with variations (Paderewski), Feux Follets (Liszt), Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Bach).

BANDSMAN (LIVERPOOL).—You are quite a satisfactory case. One wonders how many bandsmen know of the tremendous help they can get by using a player!

ORGANIST.—Did not you write us earlier in the year? So you really are a convert to the player, and the *Piano-Player Review* helped? and you have bought a ——. Excellent! Refer back to "How to Play," part 2, and mark the Chopin roll in the manner explained therein. Write again if you have any difficulty.

FIDDLER (NORWICH) and A. O. (WALSALL).—Read "Care of the Piano-player," *P.P.R.*, 1, 2, 3.

TADPOLE (EPPING).—Dear Tadpole, your alias suggests the reply. You don't wriggle that accent lever properly. What was it put there for if not for use? It would take too long to explain the exact working of it here. Read "How to Play," parts 1 and 2, Jan. and Feb. *P.P.R.*

BERT K. (CHISLEHURST).—You will never play really well while you "get through several rolls every evening." Take three, and stick at them for a whole month. The more you *really* know the less you will *think* you know.

LIBRARY (WOLVERHAMPTON).—Thou also! then see answer next above, and wash in the Jordan of repetition.

CURIOUS (NORTHAMPTON).—This beats us! No, we *don't* know how many piano-players there are in Japan—nor in Jiddah for that matter, or in Jaunpur.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[*N.B.—The Editor does not hold himself responsible for the views expressed by Correspondents.*]

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

32, ROSEMONT ROAD, ACTON, LONDON, W.

May 1st, 1913.

SIR,—I have only just seen your April issue, and hasten to make my thanks for your kindly advertisement of my player-piano playing prowess in quoting Mr. Baughan's appreciative remarks in the *Standard*.

But wasn't it rather horrid of you to go on to quote also his depreciatory remarks on the physical side of my performance on that occasion, which really meant the undue state of heat and perspiration I was forced into by the smallness of the Club lecture-room and the crowd that crammed it to suffocation?

I never suffered more from heat and oppression than I did that evening; the excitement of so enthusiastic a crowd, and the brilliancy of the chairman, etc., were quite enough; but the physical heat and oppression in addition made any playing equal in effect to the hot rooms of a Turkish bath!

Mr. Baughan's remarks may also have referred to bodily movements, and I would like to say a word or two as to that. If one is using the usual strong springs and merely pumping steadily away, the body may be almost quiescent, movement being confined to the ankles and wrists. But then the player-piano performer looks too much the mere operator of a machine, turning a handle, etc., and the sense of the individual performer is not conveyed. If my soft springs are in use, the variety of pedalling is so great that a quiescent body is all but impossible. Very few pianists are quite still at the keyboard, and the magnetism of the performer is largely conveyed and helped by the instinctive rhythmic movements of the body, a visual sign of what is being heard. If the movements seem ungraceful or unduly violent, one can always listen with closed eyes, perhaps the best way of listening to music. Take such sonata movements as the Scherzo and Presto of Beethoven's Op. 31, No. 3, the very quick pedalling necessary to give the requisitely crisp accent and phrasing of these incomparable pieces means a great deal of bodily movement; but it need not be violent or distorted; it should, indeed, be no more ungraceful than a conductor's movements, and they are often excessive enough, we all know. Indeed, I always feel that in

THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

player-piano playing one is nearer akin to a conductor than to a pianist ; the producing work being done by the instrument, one has only to direct, to govern, to control, to inspire its production ; and to do this and remain perfectly quiescent in body, to be an impassive " grinder who serenely grindest " is at any rate impossible to so mercurial a temperament as I am the victim of. I hope, though, that I shall never be convicted of ungraceful, awkward, or unduly demonstrative movements ; excess in that direction merely fails to convince, one is only a poseur, and so defeats the end aimed at, the greatest degree of musical enjoyment to one's audience.

May I take this opportunity of asking if the promised trial of my soft-spring method has taken place, and what is the verdict thereon ?

Yours faithfully,

FREDERICK H. EVANS.

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

25, MONTAGUE ROAD, RICHMOND, SURREY,

May 13th, 1913.

DEAR SIR,—I am glad to read Mr. Newman's remarks in May issue—" Its advocates will, if they are wise, refrain from claiming too much on its behalf : its good points are too many for there to be any need to overstate its case and get obviously out of touch with reason," and " For the musician of strong and semi-creative temperament there will always be a joy in direct performance upon the piano that no piano-player can give."

My conviction is that the piano-player is destined to reveal the existence of an enormous amount of semi-creative temperament that, without the piano-player, would have remained dormant.

Amateurs who would not otherwise have learned to play by hand, will, I feel sure, teach themselves to do so in order to exercise what Mr. Newman has described as their semi-creative temperament.

Yours faithfully,

W. SHARPEY SEATON.

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

SIR,—I am much obliged for your replies to my queries and for the kind invitation of " The Orchestrelle Co. " to supply them with a list of song accompaniments. To this latter, however, I fear it is not possible to respond, firstly because my list would take up more of your correspondence space than you would be prepared to give ; and secondly,

THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

the condition under which the O. Co. are prepared to cut the accompaniments, *i.e.*, "if the songs wanted are sufficiently popular," is so unsatisfactory that I am loth to waste my time on it.

I should like to insist, however, that my grievance is a real one. I have purchased an expensive 88-note "player-piano," because I believed (and still do) that it was a greatly superior instrument to the old 65-note player. On delivery of the goods I find to my annoyance and disappointment that, although possessed of a perfect technique, the music I most want to exercise it upon is not cut.

I have a feeling that I have been imposed upon, that I have bought goods under the false representations of the makers. I have a right to expect that the libraries in respect of song accompaniments shall be as efficient for the more expensive machine as they are for the cheaper one. There are a number of Brahms, H. Wolf and R. Strauss songs cut for the latter—a very limited selection it must be admitted—but even these are denied to the superior player.

The "Player" manufacturers are apparently too much occupied with the details of construction, to spend any thought upon a, to them, very important concern, *i.e.*, the manufacture of potential buyers.

Every person of taste and refinement who becomes possessed of a player is a centre of propaganda which must ultimately operate in favour of the manufacturer.

No branch of the musical art gives so complete a satisfaction to the cultured amateur as does the study of modern art songs. These are often from a pianistic point of view quite beyond the reach of the average pianist, and it has only to be realised how perfectly a really first-class "player" *can* perform them in order to bring this instrument into immediate request.

One wonders:—Do the makers realise the possibilities of the "mechanical" player? *Verb. sap.*

Yours truly,
"PLAYER."

GLASGOW, *May*, 1913.

To "E.," *The Piano-Player Review*.

32, ROSEMONT ROAD, ACTON, LONDON, W.,
16/5/13.

MY DEAR SIR,—I was delighted to see your reference to me and my soft spring mania in the May *P.P. Review*. If you are ever in town

and will look me up, I'll be delighted to finish your conversion by your own testing of my instrument here.

I am sure you will come to see ~~that~~ a perfect control over the bellows for touch by foot-pressure alone, an entire reliance on this foot-pressure for nuance, phrasing, and emotion, is the goal to aim at. In themodised work, where the levers are wholly engaged in graduating and subduing the accompaniment, it is only by soft springs that an emotional rendering of the solo—the melody, each note for itself by its own pressure, is at all possible. The levers *can't* help them, as if “flicked” over to help accent the accompaniment is loudened at same time naturally.

Don't rely on “7lb.” as the magic weight or strength—mine are nearer 5lb., I believe! Your “method” is, I am sure, a really musical one, but you will never realise it to the full until you have an instrument as sensitive as mine is, under absolute control. Come and try it.

The only “disadvantage” I know of in my method is a tendency to very slightly retard the motor in *pp* playing and *vice versa*.

Yours truly,

FREDERICK H. EVANS.

LIBRARY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

ANGELUS.

(65-Note).

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12192	Quartette in E flat. Op. 127	Beethoven	8/-					
	Third Movement. Scherzando Vivace.							
12193	Quartette in E flat. Op. 127	Beethoven	8/-					
	Fourth Movement. Finale.							
22298	Hullo! Ragtime. Revue	Louis Hirsch	3/6					
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22299	Hullo! Ragtime. Revue	Louis Hirsch	3/6					
	Bacchanal Rag.							
22300	Hullo! Ragtime. Revue	Louis Hirsch	3/6					
	Wedding Glide.							
22301	Hullo! Ragtime. Revue	Louis Hirsch	3/6					
	How do you do, Miss Ragtime?							
22302	Hullo! Ragtime. Revue	Louis Hirsch	3/6					
	Was there ever a night like this?							
32143	The Dancing Mistress	L. Monckton	3/6					
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	Introduction: Oh! Oh! Delphine.							
	Everything's at Home Except your Wifc.							

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r1133	Serenade. Op. 3, No. 5	Rachmaninoff	4/-
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	Abide with Me, A. and M. 27		
	The day Thou gavest Lord is ended, A. and M. 477		
r5010	Three Hymn Tunes. Easter. 3 Verses each		6/6
	Come ye faithful, raise the Strain, A. and M. 133		
	Jesus Christ is risen to-day, A. and M. 134		
	Jesus lives, no longer now, A. and M. 140		
r5015	Litany of Loretto (The)		4/-
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THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

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s5142	Mecaco é outro. Polka	Camillo, A.	7/6
s5144	Saltitante. Polka	Camillo, A.	9/6
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ACCOMPANIMENTS.

(Piano parts only.)

121

THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

THE ORCHESTRELLE CO.

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THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

FULL SCALE (88-Note only).

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